

**Pine Mountain Middle School
Course Handbook**

2016-2017



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** All courses are subject to change depending on teacher assignments*

Dear Parents,

We welcome you to Pine Mountain Middle School! Our goal is to fully prepare your child for high school by ensuring that they master the appropriate curriculum and standards. As you go through this handbook, we hope that you can sit down with your child and start planning out the middle school years as well as high school – and maybe even begin thinking about colleges or careers! It's never too early to think about life after high school!

One of the key factors that I strongly believe contributes to success is communication. Every Friday, a newsletter is sent home electronically called the *Mustang News*. Please take the time to read it as all pertinent information related to our school (including events and deadlines) will be in there. Our teachers do a fantastic job in keeping their blogs updated – visit their sites as frequently as you need to in order to help your child at home. In addition to these standard forms of communication, we urge you to email us should you have any specific questions about your child. Your emails and phone calls should be returned within 24-48 business hours. We encourage you to always contact your child's teacher first in an attempt to resolve any issues, and then if still not resolved, please contact our counselors or assistant principals.

Our school website is continuously updated and also contains valuable information. Perhaps our most useful tool is under the calendar tab where you will see all the grade level calendars noting upcoming tests and assignments. This is a great way to stay on top of all the deadlines middle school students face.

Another key factor to student success is parental involvement. I know many parents are tired after spending hours and hours volunteering at their elementary schools, but I urge you not to stop! Your children may want you to, but it is imperative you continue to stay involved in these three critical years of your child's life. There are numerous ways to volunteer – just ask any of our PTSA board members.

We want your experience at Pine Mountain to be a positive one. We are always trying to improve our processes and programs as well as think creatively to ensure our students receive the best education possible at Pine Mountain Middle School.

We look forward to working with you!

Jasmine Kullar
Principal

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Bell Schedule

6 th Grade		7 th Grade		8 th Grade	
1 st	9:15 – 10:09	1st Connections	9:15 – 10:09	1 st	9:15 – 10:09
2 nd	10:12 – 11:02	2nd Connections	10:12 – 11:02	2 nd	10:12 – 11:02
3rd Elective Class	11:05 – 12:42 Lunch	3rd Elective Class	11:05 – 12:42 Lunch	3rd Elective Class	11:05 – 12:42 Lunch
4 th	12:45 – 1:36	4 th	12:45 – 1:36	4th Connections	12:45 – 1:36
5 th	1:39- 2:30	5 th	1:39- 2:28	5th Connections	1:39- 2:28
6th Connections	2:31 – 3:21	6 th	2:33 – 3:21	6 th	2:33 – 3:21
7th Connections	3:24 – 4:15	7 th	3:24 – 4:15	7 th	3:24 – 4:15

All students are enrolled in 7 classes; 4 core content classes (English Language Arts, Social Studies, Science and Math), 1 elective class (electives vary in each grade level) and 2 connection classes (Band, Chorus, Orchestra, General Music, PE, Art or Engineering).

The electives is a unique part of Pine Mountain’s academic program as we aim to meet the needs of all our students. During this 3rd period lunch/elective block, students are enrolled in support classes (reading or math), or they are enrolled in interest based classes such as journalism, career awareness etc. or they are enrolled in the STEM academy. The criteria for the elective classes are typically based on academic performance and teacher recommendation.

6th Grade

Welcome to middle school! 6th grade is a big transition year as students adjust to the middle school way of life. All students are enrolled in on-level classes unless they qualify for the advanced or AC (advanced content) classes. However, any student who is enrolled in the gifted program, will be enrolled in all AC classes. In addition to advanced and AC classes, we also offer small group and team taught settings for students receiving special education services. The information below provides a brief description of the content in the required four core content classes, as well as the criteria for advanced and AC eligibility for each class. In addition to the criteria below, teacher recommendations are taken into consideration as well.

English Language Arts

In sixth grade English language arts, students continue to develop an appreciation of written and spoken language. Throughout the year, students will read a variety of informational and literary texts. Writing skills will focus on argumentative and informative/explanatory analysis essays. Brief or sustained research may be required to support the writing focus. They will study and apply grammar, use and understand vocabulary, and engage in collaborative discussions.

First Semester	Second Semester
Reading Focus: Informational Text Writing Focus: Argumentative	Reading Focus: Informational Text Writing Focus: Informative/Explanatory
Reading Focus: Literary Text Writing Focus: Informative/Explanatory	Reading Focus: Literary Text Writing Focus: Argumentative

Advanced

- 80%ile on 5th Grade ITBS Language Arts

AC

- 85%ile on 5th Grade ITBS Language Arts

Social Studies

The sixth grade social studies curriculum is part of a world studies program. It encompasses geography, history, government, and economics, and their influence on the civilization of particular countries. Skills such as map reading, data analysis, and research skills are integrated throughout the curriculum. Through this course of study, students will gain an awareness of cultural diversity

and their role in the global community.

First Semester	Second Semester
Europe	Latin America
Canada	Australia
	Personal Finance

Advanced

- 75thile on 5th Grade ITBS Total Reading

AC

- 80thile on 5th Grade ITBS Total Reading

Science

The sixth grade earth science curriculum provides students with the necessary knowledge and skills in earth science. The course is designed to provide students with an overview of the common concepts in earth science including but not limited to meteorology, geology, astronomy, hydrology, and impact of humans on the earth, resources utilization and conservation. These concepts are investigated through observing, collecting, summarizing, analyzing, and presenting the results of scientific investigations and fieldwork so students can develop the appropriate skills in science as inquiry.

First Semester	Second Semester
Safety/Scientific Method/Measurement	Meteorology
Geology	Astronomy
Hydrology	Energy Sources

Advanced and/or AC

- 80thile on 5th Grade ITBS Science

Math

By the end of math 6, students will understand how to apply and extend previous understandings of multiplication and division to divide fractions by fractions, compute fluently with multi-digit numbers and find common factors and multiples.

Students will understand ratio concepts and use ratio reasoning to solve problems, apply and extend previous understandings of arithmetic to algebraic expressions, reason about and solve one-variable equations and inequalities. Students will be able to represent and analyze quantitative relationships between dependent and independent variables, solve real-world and mathematical problems involving area, surface area, and volume. Students will develop understanding of statistical variability. Students will apply and extend previous understandings of numbers to the system of rational numbers. The advanced math class will include a unit on integers.

First Semester	Second Semester
Number System Fluency	Area and Volume
Rate, Ratio and Proportional Reasoning Using Equivalent Fractions	Statistics
Expressions	Rational Explorations: Numbers and their Opposites
One-Step Equations and Inequalities	

Advanced Math 6

- 80%ile on 5th Grade ITBS Math

Accelerated Math 6/7

- 85%ile on 5th Grade ITBS Math

7th Grade

You made it to 7th grade and realize it all wasn't too bad! Descriptions of our 7th grade classes are offered below and with their pre-requisites for the advanced and AC options. For the most part, if students were in advanced or AC classes in 6th grade, they can continue if their final grade was a minimum of 80%. In 7th grade, we do not necessarily use the ITBS because the test was taken in 5th grade making it two years old. We rely heavily on student performance in 6th grade as well as teacher recommendations.

In 7th grade, we also offer the opportunity for students to participate in the Duke TIP program (<http://www.tip.duke.edu/>). If qualified, parents can register their child to take the SAT or ACT. This provides exposure to students and in addition, depending on their scores on the SAT or ACT, they may be eligible to take certain classes in 8th grade.

English Language Arts

In Seventh Grade English Language Arts, students continue to develop an appreciation of written and spoken language. They expand their use of descriptive words and complex sentences, as well as their choices of modes of writing. Throughout seventh grade, students continue to develop the ability to critique constructively their own work as well as the work of others. Students use oral language, written language, and media and technology for expressive, informational, argumentative, critical, and literary purposes. Students use the stages of the writing process to write clear, coherent compositions that develop an idea or tell a story.

First Semester	Second Semester
Literary and Informational Text	Literary and Informational Text
Thematically Connected Shorter Texts	Thematically Connected Shorter Texts
Informative/Explanatory Writing	Argumentative Writing

Advanced

- 90% in on-level 6th grade ELA OR
- 80% in advanced 6th grade ELA OR
- 74% in AC 6th grade ELA

AC

- 95% in on-level 6th grade ELA OR
- 90% in advanced 6th grade ELA OR
- 80% in AC 6th grade ELA

Social Studies

A study of the geography, history, government, and economics of the Middle East, Africa, and Asia

First Semester	Second Semester
Middle East	African History, Government and Economics
African Geography	Asia
	Personal Finance

Advanced

- 90% in on-level 6th grade social studies OR
- 80% in advanced 6th grade social studies

AC

- 95% in on-level 6th grade social studies OR
- 85% in advanced 6th grade social studies OR
- 80% in AC 6th grade social studies

Science

The 7th Grade Life Science curriculum provides students with the necessary knowledge and skills to transition from elementary life science standards to high school biology standards. The course is designed to provide students with an overview of the common concepts and strands in the life sciences including but not limited to structures and functions of cells, tissues, organs, and organ-systems, heredity, biological evolution, diversity of living organisms, and ecosystems. These concepts are investigated through observing, collecting, summarizing, analyzing, and presenting, results of scientific investigations and fieldwork designed for students to develop appropriate knowledge and skills in science as inquiry.

First Semester	Second Semester
Safety/Classification	Evolution
Cells	Human Body Systems
Genetics	Ecology

Advanced and/or AC

- 95% in on-level 6th grade science OR
- 80% in AC 6th grade science

Math 7

The overall goal of the math curriculum is to help students develop sound mathematical habits. By the end of the 7th grade, students will apply and extend previous understandings of operations with fractions to add, subtract, multiply, and divide rational numbers; use properties of operations to generate equivalent expressions; analyze proportional relationships and use them to solve real-world and mathematical problems; use random sampling to draw inferences about a population; draw, construct, and describe geometrical figures and describe the relationships between them; investigate chance processes and develop, use and evaluate probability models.

First Semester	Second Semester
Rational Number Operations	Inferences
Expressions and Equations	Geometry
Ratios and Proportional Relationships	Probability

Advanced

- 85% test average in Math 6

AC

- 85% test average in Math 6/7

8th Grade

The final year of middle school! In 8th grade, we predominantly use ITBS scores from 7th grade, in addition to teacher recommendations for placement. January is an important time for 8th graders as you begin thinking about what courses to take in high school. And if you haven't already, it's also a great time to start thinking about colleges. May is filled with various activities for 8th grade including the 8th grade dance and the 8th grade celebration ceremony.

English Language Arts

In Eighth Grade English Language Arts, students continue to develop an appreciation of written and spoken language that now begins to extend beyond the school setting. They broaden their reading experiences through the study and analysis of compelling literature while continuing to develop their own writing styles. They independently apply the steps of the writing process to produce, revise, and publish informational and literary essays drawn from research. The emphasis on strategic processing, critical thinking, and analytical reasoning continues and helps prepare students for rigorous tests such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (S.A.T.).

First Semester	Second Semester
Reading Focus: Informational Text Writing Focus: Argumentative	Reading Focus: Informational Text Writing Focus: Informative/Explanatory
Reading Focus: Literary Text Writing Focus: Informative/Explanatory	Reading Focus: Literary Text Writing Focus: Argumentative

Advanced

- 80% in on level 7th grade ELA OR
- 85% on 7th grade ELA ITBS

AC

- 80% in AC 7th grade ELA OR
- 95% in on-level 7th grade ELA OR
- 85% on 7th grade ELA ITBS OR
- 1200+ on SRI

Social Studies

The course traces the history of Georgia in the context of the development of the entire United States. A chronological focus includes a geographic overview of the early inhabitants, the foundation of Georgia in the eighteenth century through the

state's development in the 20th century. Students also examine the characteristics of the state government, public issues and citizen rights and responsibilities. In addition, they explore contemporary and historical comparisons of state and national political institutions.

First Semester	Second Semester
Geography of Georgia	Civil War & Reconstruction
Early Inhabitants & Exploration of Georgia	Georgia's Government
Colonial Georgia & American Revolution	The Rise of Modern Georgia
Early Statehood/Foundations of Gov't	Modern Georgia
Westward Movement	

Advanced/AC

- 80% on 7th grade Reading ITBS OR
- 95% in on-level 7th grade social studies OR
- 80% in advanced or AC 7th grade social studies

Science

We offer both the 8th grade and the high school physical science classes. The physical science curriculum provides students with the necessary knowledge and skills to transition from elementary physical science standards to high school physical science standards. The course is designed to provide students with an introductory overview of the common concepts in physical science including but not limited to the nature of matter, laws of conservation of matter and energy, motion, forces, and energy transformation. These concepts are investigated through observing, collecting, summarizing, analyzing, and presenting, results of scientific investigations and fieldwork designed for students to develop the appropriate skills in science as inquiry.

First Semester	Second Semester
Characteristics of Science	Energy and its Transformations
The Nature of Matter	Waves
Motion and Force	Electricity and Magnetism

Advanced/AC

- 80% on 7th ITBS Science

High School Physical Science

- 85% on 7th ITBS Science AND
- Math 7 teacher recommendation

Math 8

By the end of 8th grade students will develop understanding of and skill with the following concepts: know that there are numbers that are not rational, and approximate them by rational numbers; work with radicals and integer exponents; understand the connections between proportional relationships, lines, and linear equations; analyze and solve linear equations and pairs of simultaneous linear equations; define, evaluate, and compare functions; use functions to model relationships between quantities; understand congruence and similarity using physical models, transparencies, or geometry software; understand and apply the Pythagorean Theorem; solve real - world and mathematical problems involving volume of cylinders, cones and spheres; investigate patterns of association in bivariate data

First Semester	Second Semester
Similarity	Linear Functions
Exponents and Equations	Linear Models and Tables
Geometric Applications of Exponents	Solving Systems of Equations
Functions	

Advanced

- 90% test average in Math 7 AND
- Teacher Recommendation

AC

- 90% test average in Math 7/8

Connections

Every student receives 2 periods of connections throughout their day. During the connections block, students are selected to participate in the classes below. The connection class lasts for a semester with the purpose to provide students a variety of options and to expose them to different areas. The only exception is chorus, band and orchestra. These classes are year-long and students will not be moved from these classes.

Chorus (year-long)

Chorus is a year-long performance based class. All course objectives pertain to the experience of performing choral music. Students will learn to read music at sight (sight-reading), notate music, use proper breath support, use appropriate posture for singing, use good diction, sing in a head voice with appropriate tone, and light choreography. They will experience music of all genres and many different cultures.

Orchestra (year-long)

The following topics will be covered as our skills develop through the year: characteristic tone quality of string instruments, rhythmic studies, bowing technique development, left hand finger patterns, scales and arpeggios, ear training, music reading, music vocabulary, shifting, vibrato, music theory, music history, composer study, orchestral literature, and musical creativity.

Band (year-long)

The purpose of the band program is to give students a solid foundation in the basics of music and to provide the opportunity to enhance this knowledge through performance. The following topics will be covered as our skills develop throughout the year: proper posture, breathing techniques, characteristic tone quality, rhythmic studies, articulation, major scales, musical terms, music theory, music history and band literature.

General Music (semester-long)

Students will be actively involved in music making through the use of keyboards and guitars. They will accomplish the Georgia Performance Standards through their participation in class and the music they use. Some of the topics of study are History of American Popular Music, Creative Drumming, World Music, Guitars and Pianos.

Art (semester-long)

Students will participate in both written and studio production activities which include **art history**, **art criticism**, **aesthetics**, and **art production**. Through looking at, talking about, and making art, students can develop a positive appreciation for the arts as well as an informed understanding of the art process. We also offer a high school art class that is based solely on teacher recommendation.

Technology and Engineering Education (semester-long)

The purpose of Technology Education is to develop technological literacy as part of all students' fundamental education through an activity-based study of past, present, and future technological systems and their resources, processes, and impact on society.

Physical and Health Education (semester-long)

All students will also have Physical Education as a portion of their connections schedule. Physical Education and connection courses are divided into 9 week blocks and students will be assigned PE from one to three blocks each year. Students taking year long connections courses such as band, orchestra and chorus generally will only have PE one block. Our goal is for all students to be introduced to and learn about a variety of physical activities, team and individual sports, as well as to increase overall fitness and health.

STEM Academy and REACH Elective Courses

REACH Electives Program

A unique feature at Pine Mountain, is our REACH Elective Program. Students will enroll in an elective class during 3rd period (which is also lunch). During REACH, we also offer a variety of STEM classes as a part of our STEM academy. Enrollment decisions will be made based on academic achievement, teacher recommendation and student interest. Most of the classes are semester long, so students can register for 2 classes per year.

6th Grade

- Reading Support
- Math Support
- Career Awareness
- Family and Consumer Science
- Student Leadership
- Community Service
- Debate

7th Grade

- Reading Support
- Math Support
- Career Discovery
- Journalism
- Communication
- American Sign Language (* year long)
- Gifted Resource
- Business and Computer Science (STEM Academy)

8th Grade

- Reading Support
- Film Study
- Spanish (* year long)
- Community Service
- Coding (STEM Academy)
- Scientific Investigations (STEM Academy)
- Science Enrichment

Kennesaw Mountain High School:

Pine Mountain Middle School has a unique feature in that Kennesaw Mountain High School is our feeder high school for all our students. This makes our transition program quite strong as we partner and collaborate with KMHS! Please take the time to visit Kennesaw Mountain's course handbook, specifically for freshmen so you can see what our students could expect. Their handbook can be found at:

<http://kmhs.typepad.com/files/freshman-exp-booklet-feb2015.pdf>

You can also find more information about Kennesaw Mountain's STEM Magnet Program and their list of AP course offerings at:

<http://kmhsmagnet.com>

23 credits are required for high school graduation. Those requirements are:

	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th
4 English Credits	9 th Lit.	World Lit.	American Lit.	English Lit., Advanced Composition, AP Lit., AP Lang.
4 Math Credits	Coordinate Algebra	Geometry	Adv. Algebra	Advanced Math Electives
4 Science Credits	Biology	Physical Science/Physics	Chemistry, Env't Science, Earth Systems, AP Science	Science Elective
3 Social Studies Credits	US History	Gov't/Economics	World History	
1 Health/PE Credit				
3 Foreign Lang/Technical/C areer/Fine Arts				
4 Electives				

* 2 units of a foreign language required for most colleges

Colleges

GPA (grade point average) is a key criteria for college admissions. Most colleges are set at a minimum 3.0 average, but the higher the GPA, the better. Below are some average GPA's of admitted students:

College	GPA
Harvard (6% admitted from 35,000 applications)	4.0
Princeton (8% admitted from 27,000 applications)	3.9
Vanderbilt (16% admitted from 25,000 applications)	3.7
University of Georgia (63% admitted from 17,000 applications)	3.6
Georgia Tech (51% admitted from 14,000 applications)	3.9
Georgia State University (51% admitted from 13,000 applications)	3.3
Georgia Southern University (49% admitted from 11,000 applications)	3.2
Auburn (70% admitted from 18,000 applications)	3.8
University of Alabama (44% admitted from 22,000 applications)	3.5
University of Florida (44% admitted from 27,000 applications)	4.0
Clemson University (60% admitted from 17,000 applications)	4.0

In addition to GPA, colleges also strongly look at:

- SAT or ACT performance
- Rigor of classes (AP classes)
- Class rank
- Essay
- Recommendations
- Extra-Curricular activities
- Particular talent/ability

source: www.collegedata.com

My Planner

My Goal for Each Grade and Actual Grade

	6th Grade		7th Grade		8th Grade	
	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual
ELA						
Social Studies						
Math						
Science						

<i>My Top 5 Desired College Choices</i>	<i>Pre-Requisites</i>
	GPA – _____ SAT/ACT - _____
	GPA – _____ SAT/ACT - _____